

Nurse Resiliency

Nurse resiliency is the ability of a nurse to accurately perceive and respond well during stressful situations (Sieg, 2015). Being resilient is extremely important in today's high stress nursing environment. Ineffectively dealing with the physical, emotional, or mental stress that is found in all areas of the nursing field can lead to an increase in nursing burnout. This burnout can not only affect how a nurse feels about a job, but his or her employer as well, increasing work dissatisfaction and turnover rates (Sieg, 2015). To prevent these issues, it is important that nurses increase their resiliency individually, and that employers aid in this by creating healthy practice environments.

Effect of Healthy Practice Environments

Healthy practice environments have been shown to increase nurse resiliency. Some traits of healthy practice environments which have been shown to create resiliency in nurses include:

- Supportive co-worker and management relationships (trust, connectedness, safe expression of emotions, hope, faith, and transpersonal caring relationships)
- Caring environments (both patient caring and caring for each other)
- Optimal healing environments (holistic care of both the patients and peers) (Lowe, 2013).

When there is a combination of patient and nurse support during stress, and total healing after stress, there is an overall increase in nurse resiliency and job satisfaction.

Personal Traits of Resilient Nurses

There are also personal traits that affect the ability of a nurse to bounce back from stress and to help others become resilient. These traits include: presence of spirit, decisive action, self-control, honesty, optimism, tenacity, hope, adaptability, and interpersonal connectedness (Hart, Brannan & DeChesnay, 2014; Tubbert, 2014). While some nurses naturally exhibit these traits, others may need training to develop them. Some factors that have been found to be traits or actions that can be developed and may increase personal resilience are:

- Ability to confront your fears
- Maintaining an optimistic and realistic outlook
- Seeking/accepting social acceptance
- Imitating resilient role models
- Relying on a moral inner compass
- Turning to religious or other spiritual practices
- Accepting things that cannot be changed
- Taking care of personal health and well-being
- Actively solving problems

- Looking for meaning and opportunity for growth
- Utilizing humor
- Maintaining work-life balance
- Being responsible for personal emotional well-being
- Using adversity for personal growth (Hart, Brannan & DeChesnay, 2015; Leverence, 2015)

Strategies to Increase Nurse Resiliency

There are strategies that can be implemented in a patient care unit if there is a problem with low nurse resiliency. These strategies may be effective in developing those traits and actions that increase resiliency. Some of the training topics that have been shown to be helpful with building resiliency include: mindfulness, stress reduction, relaxation techniques, time management, organizational skills, cognitive reframing, critical reflection, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and team-building (Chesak, et al., 2015; Hart, Brannan & DeChesnay, 2014). Professional development workshops focusing on these topics can help nurses build resilience not only against the stress in the practice environment, but against personal stress as well.

Health care organizations can also implement strategies to increase resiliency among nurses. Recommended approaches include:

- Practice environment assessment
- Shared governance
- Mentorship programs
- Graduate nurse residency programs
- Formal and informal debriefing after a stressful event
- A zero-tolerance policy for lateral violence
- Incentives for personal wellness.

Administrative support for strategies to enhance resiliency is essential to success! (Hart, Brannan & DeChesnay, 2014).

References

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Recommended Resources

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